

lent, and from that standpoint some of his tales are undoubtedly masterpieces of their kind.

Unfortunately there was insanity in Guy de Maupassant's family, which was old, of good nobility, but limited means. His father, who had been a painter and had played a prominent part in founding a famous Paris art club, had died in a lunatic asylum. The same fate befel his brother; and, according to some accounts, there was insanity on Ms mother's side also. In any case, from birth onward a dreadful threat hung over Guy de Maupassant, and the life he led from the time he became his own master was not calculated to ward off the danger. He was a man of the strongest passions, a *leau male*, as the French say; and women began the work which absinthe, opium, and morphia completed. At last, still young in years, at the height of his celebrity, he attempted his life, and was only saved from immediate death to languish awhile in an asylum. One cannot think of him, as of some others, without feeling the force of the contention that very little may at times separate genius from insanity.

Immediately "Les Soirees de Mefdan" appeared, its contributors were chaffed by the newspapers for attributing undue importance to themselves; and Zola was said to be bringing up these young men in leading-

strings for the
express advancement of his literary theories.
A rather
acrimonious controversy ensued, Zola
repeatedly declaring
that he was not, and did not wish to be, a *chef
d'6cole*, and
that those with whom he was associated were
his friends and
not his disciples. But the discussion suddenly
ceased, for
the literary world of Paris was startled by the
unexpected
news of Gustave Flaubert's death at Oroisset,
near Rouen.